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**<https://energysavings.opalco.com/electric-life-blog/>**

# Bruce Nyden: Living the Electric Life on High

A lifelong outdoor enthusiast, scuba diver and activist for healthy oceans, Bruce Nyden has channeled his passion for the environment into energy efficiency and renewable power. His home in Friday Harbor is a demonstration project of best practices, featuring some of the latest nifty gadgets.

"If I can show people what's possible," said Nyden, "maybe I can help move the needle on making the changes we need for a healthy environment and to get away from fossil fuels."

An early adopter of electric vehicles, he has an assortment in his driveway including an all-electric utility truck that is primed to become an emergency response station, a mobile arts or farm stand – or perhaps a mobile charging station. There are three EV chargers in his garage and a folding electric assist bicycle. Electric tools are neatly charging and ready for use including a brush chipper, chainsaw, pole saw trimmer, lawnmower and blower.

On the rooftops of his home and shop, solar panels are powering his electric life with a Sonnen battery wall for storage and backup. His system is interconnected to the OPALCO grid, spinning his meter forward and backward, depending on the weather. This time of year, he produces more energy than he uses and the surplus is held for up to a year to offset the cloudy months. Local renewable producers get a check for any unused surplus each April.

The inside of his home is no slouch, either. After doing an OPALCO Home Snapshot Assessment, he has retrofitted his lighting with LEDs, added insulation and recently completed several Switch it Up! projects for home and water heating. After learning about newer, more efficient systems, Nyden updated the existing heat pump for the house and added a ductless heat pump system for the outbuilding, which houses his shop and office. The most recent Switch it Up! project was a heat pump water heater to replace a failing electric resistance water heater in his home. Check out a video explaining this project.

"These measures are saving me money – yes," said Nyden. "But more importantly, they will continue paying dividends to the next family who will own



this house and ripple on down the line. The value of the home goes up and so do the benefits to the environment. We have got to go electric to get away from fossil fuels and all the pollution they cause – not the least of which is ocean acidification."

What's next? Fiber! Nyden is working with Rock Island, organizing his neighborhood to get the middle mile of fiber network installed; each household can install the last mile when they are ready. Now that OPALCO members can finance their last mile fiber connection on their electric bills with Switch it Up! it's more accessible and, with the disruption of the pandemic, more important than ever.

"My neighborhood demographic is definitely older," Nyden explained. "With COVID-19, the fiber will give folks the ability to safely see their doctors using telemedicine, access education resources and remote work. It also lets people control their energy efficiency remotely and monitor results and savings."

Nyden's evangelism for living the electric life is infectious and his motivation is simply to share the benefits of efficiency and connection as far and wide as possible. He uses SmartHub (OPALCO's online bill pay and energy usage tool) to monitor his usage, efficiency and savings and is happy to share what he's learned through these projects with OPALCO members. If you are interested in learning more, contact him at: [bbnyden@gmail.com](mailto:bbnyden@gmail.com).

For more information on energy efficiency, to schedule a Home Snapshot Energy Audit, apply for rebates or start your own Switch it Up! project, go to [www.opalco.com](http://www.opalco.com).

Watch the video about his heat pump water heater:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdpXfuQZXoM&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdpXfuQZXoM&feature=emb_logo)